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# A Philosophically Appealing Nietzschean Theory of Value

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Claremont McKenna College

**A Philosophically Appealing Nietzschean Theory of Value**

submitted to

Professor James Kreines

and

Dean Peter Uvin

by

Gustavo Pires de Oliveira Dias

for

Senior Thesis

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is an attempt to bring forth a novel and philosophically appealing reading of Nietzsche, especially as it pertains to his theory of value. I define philosophically appealing as the view with the least amount of inconsistencies that still reaches a simple and logical conclusion. I explore questions regarding Nietzsche's nihilism, his normative and metaphysical claims, as well as his view on human nature. I aim to satisfy sophisticated readers by investigating complex philosophical issues related to my interpretation of Nietzsche. I also aim to satisfy less sophisticated readers by explaining how my view is applicable, and beneficial, to one's life. Given that there's no widespread agreement as to what reading of Nietzsche is correct, the goal of my thesis is to contribute meaningfully to this ongoing debate.

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## **Acknowledgements**

First and Foremost, I would like to thank Prof. Kreines. Not only has he helped tremendously in the writing of my thesis but he has also been an instrumental part of my college years. As a professor and a mentor, Kreines has helped me grow both philosophically and personally. I can't thank him enough for all his guidance and feedback.

I must also thank my parents for always giving me unconditional support and love. They are by far my biggest role models and inspiration. I am incredibly lucky to have such an amazing family.

This thesis symbolizes my learning experience as a Philosophy major at Claremont McKenna College. I learned to develop new ideas while still being honest about the difficulties that my idea faces. I believe in the value of critical analysis; not only of other people's ideas but of my own as well. I hope that my thesis is a sincere reflection of that.

## **1. Introduction**

Nietzsche is a philosopher who seems to contradict himself throughout his works. Because of that, knowing exactly what his view is on matters like value and metaphysics is extremely difficult. There are many different interpretations of Nietzsche and he is still a live and controversial topic in philosophy. In this paper, I will propose an interpretation of Nietzsche's theory of value that, to my knowledge, has not yet been proposed.

The goals for my interpretation are that it should be philosophically appealing and in conformity with the textual evidence. By philosophically appealing, I mean a view that has the least amount of inconsistencies while still reaching a simple and logical conclusion. Furthermore, this view should conform well to Nietzsche's prescription regarding the Overman as well as to some of his most consistent claims; like the claim that there are no intrinsic values, for example. For sophisticated readers, this view will present an alternative to many problematic interpretations of Nietzsche. For those less familiar with Nietzsche's works, this view will yield a conclusion that aligns with common sense and is easily applicable to one's life.

I will start this paper by defending the view that Nietzsche is not a nihilist and explain why some interpreters mistakenly hold such view. By explaining the lifestyle choices that men are faced with, I will show which lifestyles Nietzsche thinks are bad, and which one he thinks is good. I will then argue that Nietzsche regards certain lifestyles as having negative value because those lifestyles undermine themselves; they fail at their own standard. I will then show that, the lifestyle that Nietzsche considers good is self-affirming. Those arguments are an attempt to convince the reader that Nietzsche can say that things are good or bad without relying on intrinsic

values. Convincing the reader of that is an attempt to support the overall view that Nietzsche is consistent in his claims about intrinsicity and values. After that, I will present the different characteristics of Nietzschean values and explain why these characteristics are philosophically appealing. I will then bring forth some objections to my theory and respond to them accordingly. At the end of this paper, I hope to have convinced the reader that my view is one of the best readings of Nietzsche, both philosophically and interpretatively.

## **2. Is Nietzsche a Value-Nihilist?**

Many interpreters of Nietzsche consider him to be a nihilist. More specifically, they consider Nietzsche to be a value nihilist. A value nihilist is someone that thinks that there is no such thing as values. In other words, a value nihilist thinks that nothing is good and nothing is bad; values simply do not exist. Nihilism can thus be equated to error-theory.<sup>1</sup> Error-theory about values says that all evaluative claims, such as “X is good (or bad)”, are always and necessarily false.

Hussain holds the view that Nietzsche is an error-theorist about all values. Even though I do not agree with Hussain’s view, he does make an important distinction that one should keep in mind when interpreting Nietzsche’s view on value and nihilism. Namely, the distinction between moral values and all other types of values. Knowing that this distinction is in place, and understanding it, is necessary for correctly decoding Nietzsche.

Moral values are the values that normally come from religion and include things like charity and asceticism. However, that does not exhaust the class of things that

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<sup>1</sup> The reader can think about error-theory as a consequence of nihilism. If one believes that there are no such things as values, one must believe that all of the claims of the



Nietzsche calls “moral values”<sup>2</sup>. Hussain argues that Nietzsche is a nihilist and thus an error-theorist about morality. Morality is always mistaken because they believe in moral values when in fact there is no such thing as moral values; all of the claims of the form ‘X is morally valuable’ are always and necessarily false. I agree with Hussain on this point and also classify Nietzsche as an error-theorist about morality.

However, we still need to determine what Nietzsche’s view is regarding all other types of values. In order to do this, there is another distinction that one should keep in mind, the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic values. Intrinsic values are values that are valuable in and of themselves. On the other hand, extrinsic values are values that are valuable in virtue of something else. Nietzsche clearly claims that there are no intrinsic values in the world, moral or non-moral. While arguing for this point in the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes, “Whatever has value in our world now does not have value in itself, according to its nature - nature is always value-less, but has been given value at some time, as a present - and it was we who gave and bestowed it.”<sup>3</sup>. In other words, for Nietzsche, nothing is intrinsically valuable.

After observing the fact that Nietzsche denies all intrinsic values, Nadeem Hussain concludes that Nietzsche is an error-theorist about all values. In his paper, *Honest Illusion: Valuing for Nietzsche’s Free Spirits*, Hussain writes, “Nietzsche’s nihilism: Nietzsche claims that nothing has value in itself and therefore all of the claims of the form ‘X is valuable’ are false.”<sup>4</sup> And so, Hussain thinks that Nietzsche’s argument is: value only exists as long as it is intrinsic, and nothing is intrinsically

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<sup>2</sup> I will dive deeper into this distinction later. For the purposes of this section, it is sufficient for the reader to understand that there is a distinction that is central to Nietzsche’s theory of value.

<sup>3</sup> GS 2001, pp. 171

<sup>4</sup> Hussain 2007, pp. 159

valuable, it must follow that there are no such things as values. Nietzsche is thus a nihilist and an error-theorist about all values.

The presupposition that Nietzsche believes that value can only exist as long as it is intrinsic is mistaken and so I disagree with Hussain. To support the view that this presupposition is mistaken, I will first explain why he is an error-theorist about morality. Then, I will explain why one cannot draw a parallel between his view of moral values and his view of non-moral values.

The reason why Nietzsche is an error-theorist about morality is because he thinks that morality requires one to believe that moral values are intrinsically valuable. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche says that, “What moral and religious judgments have in common is the belief in things that are not real. Morality is just an interpretation of certain phenomena or (more accurately) a misinterpretation”<sup>5</sup>. These “things” that Nietzsche is referring to are metaphysical realities that would necessitate the truth-value of morality and thus make it intrinsically true or valuable. Moral values are different than all other types of values because moral values posit such intrinsic realities. However, there are no such things as intrinsic values and so positing such realities will necessarily lead to a falsity.

One must note that the fact that morality is always false does not lead to it being always bad, this is not the argument that Nietzsche is laying out. Rather, by showing that morality is always false, Nietzsche shows that error-theory about morality follows from that. This distinction is an attempt to show the reader that Nietzsche thinks that moral values and non-moral values are fundamentally different. One of the characteristics of moral values not shared by non-moral values is the fact that morality

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<sup>5</sup> TW 2010, pp. 183

always posits intrinsic values while non-moral values do not. That is the case because non-moral values can be valuable in virtue of something else. Non-moral values can be considered good relative to a fact about human nature, for example. Therefore, it is not the case that non-moral values necessarily have to be intrinsically valuable, and so there is room to hold certain things as valuable while still claiming that nothing in the world is intrinsically valuable.<sup>6</sup>

Even though Nietzsche thinks that there are no such things as moral values, he won't be forced to hold the same view when it comes to non-moral values. The fact that there are no intrinsic values does not make Nietzsche an error-theorist about all values.

We in fact have reason to believe that Nietzsche holds certain things as being valuable and he is thus not a nihilist regarding all types of value. He many times claims that certain things are bad and that other things are good and I will now present textual evidence to support this point. In the first passage, Nietzsche indicates that a certain lifestyle has negative value. In the following passage, he indicates that a certain lifestyle has positive value. This evidence should show the reader that, even though Nietzsche thinks that there are no intrinsic values, one should not consider him to be a nihilist regarding all values.

Nietzsche many times claims that the life of the last man is bad. However, how can Nietzsche claim that the last man live a bad life without presupposing that there is a different lifestyle that is good? There is thus a standard relative to which Nietzsche deems things as valuable or not valuable, good or bad. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*,

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<sup>6</sup> Just because something is valuable in virtue of something else does not indicate that such thing is extrinsically valuable. I do recognize that more needs to be said regarding this issue and I will do that later on this paper.

Nietzsche writes, "There is no sorer misfortune in all human destiny (...) the last men, (...) more beast than man"<sup>7</sup>. This passage shows that Nietzsche clearly thinks that the life of the last man is bad. The last man fail to meet the standard held by Nietzsche and so he classifies them as the worst thing that can happen to human kind. Given his view on intrinsic values, and assuming that Nietzsche's value theory remains consistent, he would have to say that the life of the last man is extrinsically non-valuable.

The life of the last man is non-valuable and the life of the Overman is valuable. Again in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche claims that, "Man is something that shall be overcome. (...) What is the ape to man? A laughingstock or a painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the Overman: a laughingstock or a painful embarrassment (...) The Overman is the meaning of the earth."<sup>8</sup> Being like the Overman is what gives meaning to our existence and if we fail to be like the Overman we are failing at life. Nietzsche thinks that one should strive to be like the Overman as there is value in living such a life. One can thus conclude that Nietzsche seems to think that being like the Overman is meaningful and valuable, even if not intrinsically so.

If Nietzsche were a nihilist about all values, he would have to say that the lifestyle of the last men is just as good as the lifestyle of the Overman as there are no intrinsic or extrinsic values to separate them. However, as indicated by the above passages, this is clearly not his view. What makes the life of the Overman valuable is a concern for a later section; the point is that there is some sort of standard for Nietzsche that

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<sup>7</sup> Z 2006, pp. 198

<sup>8</sup> Z 2006, pp. 5

makes one thing better than the other. For Nietzsche, there are positive and negative values.

Given that these passages support the view that Nietzsche is not a value nihilist and thinks that certain things, like being the Overman, have value; there are two interpretative possibilities that we are faced with. Either Nietzsche is contradicting himself and relying on intrinsic values to say that the life of the Overman is good and the life of the last man is bad, or Nietzsche is consistent and is relying on extrinsic values to make this distinction. I am going to argue that Nietzsche is consistent when it comes to his view on values. Philosophically, this is a heavy burden to bear. We must establish a framework to deem things as valuable or non-valuable without assuming that anything is valuable in itself. This paper is an attempt to do just that.

### **3. Nietzsche's Options**

Given that there are no intrinsic values, humans can take one of three routes: "slave morality", "last men", or Overman. Nietzsche thinks that slave morality and the last men are both bad. Since those lifestyles are bad, the alternative lifestyle, i.e. the Overman, is good. Before I explain why these are the only three lifestyle choices given that there are no intrinsic values, I must note that I will only explain why the lifestyle of the men of slave morality and the lifestyle of the last men are bad on the following section. I must also note that the lifestyle of the Overman is not only valuable by negation; it is also valuable by its own merit. The aim of this section is to show the reader that the lifestyle of the Overman is the alternative to the two other options that Nietzsche considers bad. This will be important later on in this paper.

So why are these our only lifestyle choices? Quite simply, men can either believe in intrinsic values or not. Recall the distinction in section 2, where I defended

the view that morality is different than other value-theories because morality posits intrinsic values. In this view, and for the purposes of this paper, “morality” just means any kind of intrinsic value theory. Nietzsche says that all lifestyles that posit intrinsic values are equally bad; they are all equivalent in some sense. The equivalence comes from the fact that they enslave men with something outside of men’s control. Because of that, Nietzsche calls all intrinsic value theories “slave morality”.

Nietzsche defends this view in his book *The Antichrist*. He writes, “Anyone with theologian blood in his veins will approach things in a warped and deceitful attitude. This gives rise to a pathos that calls itself faith: turning a blind eye to yourself for once and for all, so you do not have to stomach the sight of incurable mendacity. This universally faulty optic is made into a morality, a virtue, a holiness (...)”<sup>9</sup> The belief in something intrinsic is necessarily false and leads to men being enslaved.<sup>10</sup> For Nietzsche, being enslaved by something false and outside of our control is bad, but not intrinsically so. In the following section, I will show how Nietzsche can claim that such enslavement is bad without positing intrinsic values.

If men do not believe in intrinsic values, however, he can either be the last man or the Overman. Those are the only choices available for men. That is the case because, if one does not believe in intrinsic values, this will affect one’s life. The most common and predictable way that will affect one’s life is by pushing one towards practical nihilism, i.e. the last man. This happens because such man mistakenly thinks that the fact that there are no intrinsic values makes it so that there is no value whatsoever. From this theoretical nihilism, man is prone to become practical nihilists and live their lives as if there was no meaning. This man is working

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<sup>9</sup> AC 2010, pp.8

<sup>10</sup> I will explain why this is the case on the following section.

under the presupposition that value can only exist as long as it is intrinsic. If men truly think that, they will act as if it was true. This will turn men into complacent and passive animals. As we have showed, Nietzsche thinks that this lifestyle is the worst thing that can happen to human kind and so not the lifestyle that men should pursue.

Why is the Overman the alternative then? If men do not believe in intrinsic values and do not make the unwarranted jump from no intrinsic values to no values whatsoever, then man will not necessarily fall into meaninglessness. If a man doesn't presuppose that value can only exist as long as it is intrinsic, then he has the ability to look for some extrinsic value that he finds meaningful. The Overman thus escapes the lifestyle of the last man by not making this tempting and yet unwarranted inference. By avoiding the conclusion that theoretical nihilism is true, which we have shown that Nietzsche does not hold; the Overman will not be a practical nihilist.

However, I still need to show how Nietzsche can claim that the lifestyles of the man of slave morality and of the last man are both bad without relying on intrinsic values. Section 4 is my attempt to do precisely that. I must also explain the positive sense in which the Overman is valuable, and I shall do that on section 5. This section was aimed at showing the reader that one of the virtues of the Overman is that he can escape the bad lifestyles. It is a virtue because these bad lifestyles are indeed tempting and somewhat easy to pursue. We need to see this as a virtue of the Overman in order to fully understand Nietzschean values. There will be more on this later.

#### **4. Self-defeating**

The lifestyle of the man of slave morality and the lifestyle of the last man are both self-defeating. In this section, I will show that Nietzsche can claim that a self-

defeating lifestyle is bad without relying on intrinsic values. I will then show that slave morality and the last man are self-defeating. By saying that such lifestyles are self-defeating, Nietzsche is saying that they fail to meet their own standard. This should begin to convince the reader that Nietzsche is indeed consistent in his theory of value.

Will Nietzsche have to say that being self-defeating is intrinsically bad? The answer is no. Self-defeating can be bad relative to something about us. It doesn't have to be bad relative to intrinsic values as it can just be bad relative to a trait that humans have, for example. For Nietzsche, that trait is the will to power. Satisfying our will to power, however, is not intrinsically good or valuable. Satisfying our will to power just is the standard that is set for ourselves. For Nietzsche, being alive simply means having a will to power and acting on it. If we contradict our will to power, we are contradicting our standard and ourselves. Also, since the will to power equates to life, denying the will to power is the same as denying ourselves life; it is the same as killing ourselves.

Our will to power can be characterized as a desire. It is in fact our most basic desire; it is our desire to stay alive. Nietzsche makes an identity claim between having a will to power and being alive. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes, "(...) if this body is living and not dying (...) It will have to be the embodiment of the will to power (...) because it is *alive*, and because life *is* precisely will to power."<sup>11</sup> In order to live, one must have the will to power. Everything that's alive has a will to power. Therefore, for Nietzsche, it is impossible to live and not have the will to power; it is a contradiction to even posit such scenario.

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<sup>11</sup> BGE 2001, pp. 153



Given that we are alive, we have the will to power. Given that the will to power is a desire, we aim to act on it. If we fail to act on our will to power, we have failed to meet the standard that we have set for ourselves. Failing this standard is what Nietzsche thinks is bad and has negative value. Even though we did not consciously set this standard, it is nevertheless engrained in the nature of all life, as life just is the will to power. Therefore, if we live a life that directly contradicts our will to power, we are living a self-contradictory life. No intrinsicity needs to be posited to argue for the view that contradicting ourselves is bad as contradicting ourselves is only extrinsically bad.

Given this notion of self-defeating as extrinsically bad, I will argue as to why the lifestyle of the man of slave morality and the last man are both bad. By showing that this is true, we will show that the lifestyle of the Overman is good as it negates slave morality and the last man. Again, that is not the only reason that the Overman is good. Nevertheless, the fact that it escapes the self-defeating lifestyles is an important and valuable characteristic of the Overman that is worth highlighting for a complete Nietzschean theory of value.

In order to argue as to why all types of slave morality are self-defeating, take the fact that many times men have contradicting desires.<sup>12</sup> Since we have opposing desires, we will inevitably hit a point where we would have to make a choice between desire 1 or desire 2. Someone that adheres to slave morality, however, will never choose between desire 1 or desire 2. Rather, the theory of value that such a person

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<sup>12</sup> I will defend the claim that we have contradicting desires in the following section.

ascribes too will indicate what desire the person should choose.<sup>13</sup> This person will thus never be able to make a choice about which desire is more important to her. Not being able to make a choice will drag a person away from its most basic desire, i.e. will to power.

It still not clear as to why the man who has no control over the choice regarding his desires fails to fulfill his will to power. To elucidate this point, take Nietzsche's definition of our will to power, "My idea is that every specific body strives to (...) extend its force (its will to power) and to thrust back all that resists its extension."<sup>14</sup> The parenthesis were not added, they are in fact a part of the text. One can thus take the will to power to mean extend one's force or influence. For Nietzsche, being alive simply is striving to extend one's force and life cannot exist without the striving to extend one's force.

The man of slave morality, however, does not make choices that allow him to extend his force; rather, force is extended upon him. He gives himself to an intrinsic theory of value that will dictate if he chooses desire 1 or desire 2. He strips himself away from this choice by submitting himself to a value that is outside of his control and allowing this value to enslave him. He cannot extend his force as he can only have outside values extended force upon him. There is thus a connection between the failing to fulfill one's will to power and the enslavement created by slave morality. Namely, this enslavement will necessarily lead to the contradiction of one's will to power.

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<sup>13</sup> The enslavement aspect of slave morality is important here. I will show why this is the case after defining the will to power.

<sup>14</sup> WP 1968, pp. 340

This contradiction of the will to power comes from a choice that such a man made, that's why he directly undermines himself. Such person will fail by his own standard. The mere fact that he is alive means that he has a will to power that he strives to fulfill. The mere fact that he believes in intrinsic values means that he is necessarily powerless and can never fulfill his will to power. Therefore, all kinds of slave morality are self-defeating. The man of slave morality purposefully undermines himself and his will to power.

Nietzsche uses almost that exact wording in *Twilight of the Idols*, when he says that, "(...) they undermine the will to power; they level mountain and valley, and call that morality (...)".<sup>15</sup> In order to give context to this passage, one must note that Nietzsche uses this sentence to explain what he sees as the negation of freedom. As we have shown, slave morality is constraining and thus contrary to freedom. Any kind of intrinsic value theory contradicts freedom and that's why he says that those who undermine the will to power call it morality. There will be more on freedom later.<sup>16</sup> One must nevertheless note that, in this passage, Nietzsche makes an identity claim between undermining the will to power and slave morality. And so, since slave morality necessarily undermines the will to power, it is self-defeating and fails the standard it has set for itself.

Nietzsche can say that slave morality is bad without relying on intrinsic values. By showing that undermining one's will to power is a contradiction as one will be alive and yet not have a characteristic that is necessary for life, Nietzsche can say that slave morality is self-contradictory. The enslavement that is produced by slave

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<sup>15</sup> TW 2010, pp. 213

<sup>16</sup> There's an important connection between freedom and will to power and that connection will be explained in section 5.

morality is what gives the means for men to contradict themselves. Given that slave morality is self-defeating, and the lifestyle of the Overman helps us escape slave morality, the lifestyle of the Overman is good by negation. But another option yet remains. Given that there are no intrinsic values, and one recognizes that, instead of living the life of slave morality and false ideals, one can simply become an indifferentist. One can become a practical nihilist and not attempt to find intrinsic meaning where there is none. However, Nietzsche thinks that this lifestyle is also self-contradictory.

Nietzsche thinks that the same thing that happens to the man of slave morality also happens to last man, i.e. he fails to satisfy his most basic desire. He contradicts his will to power as force outside of his control is extended upon him, and not the other way around. Interestingly enough, practical nihilism is an intrinsic value theory. However, the intrinsic values are never instantiated. It is a theory that begins with the presupposition that value can only exist as long as it intrinsic but reaches the conclusion that there are no intrinsic values. And so, upon such discovery, the man who believe in this theory fall into meaninglessness. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche writes, “(...) your self itself wants to die and turns away from life. No longer is it capable of that which it wants most: to create beyond itself. This it wants most of all, this is its entire fervor.”<sup>17</sup> The last man is a complacent and passive being that does not aim to fulfill its most basic desire. “Create beyond itself” is Nietzsche’s way of saying extend one’s force, which the last man is not capable of doing. Nietzsche says that the last man wants to die and gives up on life as he no longer can do what he desires most, which is extend its force. This statement is perfectly

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<sup>17</sup> Z 2006, pp. 24

consistent with the view I have been outlining and also in conformity with Nietzsche's definition of the will to power and the claim that the last man directly contradicts his will to power. This happens because the last man submits control of himself to this theory of meaninglessness; he allows for force to be extended upon himself. Therefore, the last man directly contradicts its most basic desire, it undermines itself and it is also a self-defeating, or self-contradictory, lifestyle.

One might object and claim that the last man doesn't fail by his own standard. The last man won't fail by his own standard because the last man sets no standard for himself. He is content in being a passive being and has somehow lost his will to power. If the will to power is not present in the last man, the last man won't be self-contradictory and thus Nietzsche cannot claim that his lifestyle is bad. However, as it was previously mentioned, living simply is having a will to power. The last man is indisputably living and so he necessarily has engrained in him the desire to fulfill his will to power; at least according to Nietzsche. His will to power still exists even if he tries to suppress this desire and not act on it. If the last man tries to change the standard for himself, it would not succeed to do so. For Nietzsche, life necessarily has a will to power and so, by failing to strive to satisfy its will, the last man is failing by his own standard. Nietzsche can thus claim that the last man lives a self-contradictory lifestyle.<sup>18</sup>

Given that there are only three main lifestyle choices, the life of the Overman is necessary for escaping self-contradictory lifestyles. Self-defeating lifestyles are bad

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<sup>18</sup> The "Objections" section will respond to this worry at length. For now, I responded to the interpretative concern by showing that, on Nietzsche's view, the last man must still have the will to power. Later on, I will respond to objectors who believe that, philosophically speaking, the last man could get rid of his will to power.

because they force humans to refrain from satisfying their most basic desire in a self-contradictory way. That does not make self-defeating intrinsically bad, it just makes it universally bad. It is not intrinsically bad because it is bad relative to all life and not relative to an intrinsic value. It is universally bad because Nietzsche's criterion is applicable to all man<sup>19</sup>.

After eliminating the two self-defeating possibilities, Nietzsche needs to come up with a prescription for something that will allow us to escape the bad lifestyles, i.e. the Overman. Since he wants to deem this lifestyle as good and as the meaning of our existence, the Overman cannot only negate the other bad lifestyles but also needs a positive upshot. There is thus a positive sense as to why the life of the Overman is good. Namely, the life of the Overman is self-affirming as the Overman is able to continuously and actively fulfill his will to power.

## **5. The Overman**

The Overman is different than the men of morality because he recognizes that there are no intrinsic values and thus do not falsely believe in them. The Overman is better than the last men because the Overman will not let the fact that there are no intrinsic values push him towards indifferentism. Also, and most importantly, the Overman lives a self-affirming lifestyle. Since the Overman lives a self-affirming life, he meets the standard that is set out by Nietzsche.

The reader will notice that the first step to becoming the Overman is by negating the self-defeating lifestyles. There is such an order because of the temptation

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<sup>19</sup> We have said that all life has the will to power so the reader might wonder why this standard only applies to man. To show why this is the case, I will explain what Nietzsche calls the "internalization of man" on section 5.

that the self-defeating lifestyles have. We normally think of especially slave morality as something normal in society and what people choose to pursue in order to find meaning in their lives. Also, practical nihilism seems to be what happens when people believe that there are no intrinsic values. Later on this section, I will show exactly how Nietzsche argues that this is the case. Given that those lifestyles are the intuitive routes to follow, one of the virtues of the Overman is the fact that he recognizes the badness existent in those lifestyles and refrains from undermining himself. After that, he goes on to live a self-affirming lifestyle. There is a temporal order to these events. I have thus presented the paper in this way in order to go in line with Nietzsche's prescription.

One of the reasons that the Overman meets the standard set out by Nietzsche is because he is free. Being free allows him to exercise his will to power. In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche claims that the Overman is "(...) a man with his own, independent, enduring will, whose prerogative it is to promise - and in him a proud consciousness, (...) an actual awareness of power and freedom (...)”<sup>20</sup>. In order for one to be like the Overman one must be free in some sense. One must also be aware of his will to power. Freedom is valuable as it helps man exercise his will to power. Being free means that the Overman is not bound by religious, moral or any sort of alleged intrinsic constraints, his actions are free in the sense that they are not affected by false theories of values or by anything outside his control. He has his own independent will and his actions are solely determined by his will. The Overman is the “sovereign individual”. His actions and thoughts are based on what he thinks is right.

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<sup>20</sup> GM 1994, pp.

Because of that, he does not have force extended upon him, contrary to the last man and the man of slave morality. Being free from false intrinsic value theories allows the Overman to act on his most basic desire and extend his force. Freedom is necessary to escape theories that try to extend force upon man and thus opens up space for man to extend his own force. So far, this tells us that the man who is free has achieved the first milestone in his journey towards being self-affirming. However, in order to go all the way, this man not only needs to be free but also needs to act on his will to power.

Nietzsche characterizes freedom as liberty, which is what we described above, but also as self-mastery. In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes, “What means have we for making things beautiful, attractive, and desirable, when they are not so? And I suppose they are never so in themselves! (...) we want to be the poets of our lives (...)”<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche is urging us to master ourselves. Mastering one’s self entails finding what one finds meaningful while knowing that nothing in the world has intrinsic meaning. We must give our lives its own meaning, like a poet does to a poem. The fact that the Overman recognizes that there is no intrinsic goodness or meaningfulness in the world, allows him to find what he personally thinks is meaningful. One finds his meaning, or “force”, by mastering one’s self. After the Overman finds his own meaning, he acts on his will to power by projecting that meaning onto the world. Therefore, for Nietzsche, using freedom to liberate and master ourselves will allow us to build the force that we will later extend onto the world.

This is an important part to stop and look at some implications of my argument thus far. For once, we have been saying that the will to power is present in

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<sup>21</sup> GS 2001, pp.169



all life, and so what does Nietzsche say about animals like rats, for example? It seems like, if will to power is the standard, then the rats also need to be free from intrinsic value theories and find their own meaning in life. However, such a view would be bizarre, to say the least, and not in accordance with Nietzsche's claims. There seems to be a difference between humans and other animals. This difference is precisely the reason why humans need to be weary of the threats of slave morality and practical nihilism while animals do not. Therefore, Nietzsche owes us an account as to how and why humans and animals are different.

As I already mentioned, the order in which events happen is important for Nietzsche. There is a crucial point in history where men became different than other animals and he mentions that on his book *On the Genealogy of Morality*. On the second essay, under section 16, he explains the difference between man and other animals. Among many other things, he writes, "(...) the most fundamental of all changes which he (man) experienced, – that change whereby he finally found himself imprisoned within the confines of society and peace."<sup>22</sup> For Nietzsche, men started to separate themselves from animals when they joined together in society. That was the crucial moment in history where a line was drawn between men and beasts.

When one lives in a society, there are certain rules that need to be obeyed. Such rules are created and enforced in order to ensure that all men of the society can live in harmony with one another. Because of this convention that was developed as an unavoidable consequence of society, men had to stop themselves from acting on their desires. Nietzsche writes, "All instincts which are not discharged outwardly *turn inwards* – this is what I call the *internalization* of man: with it there now evolves in

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<sup>22</sup> GM 1994, pp.56

man what will later be called his ‘soul’. The whole inner world, originally stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin, was expanded and extended itself and gained depth, breadth and height in proportion to the degree that the external discharge of man’s instincts was *obstructed*.”<sup>23</sup>

A man couldn’t just steal another man’s food if he was hungry; he had to make an effort to act against his desire to do so in order to keep living in that society. He thus had two desires, the desire to steal and the desire to live in society; both of these desires cannot be fulfilled as they oppose one another. The “internalization of man” is what gives rise to contradicting desires in men. For Nietzsche, the development of society clashes with many of men’s animal instincts. However, those instincts do not simply disappear; rather, they just come into conflict with the socially acceptable behavior. Men, now with contradicting desires, are forced to make a choice as to what desire to pursue.

For society to work, man had to deny himself many of his animal desires, like the desire to steal food when hungry, for example. In order to justify the denial of such desires, men posited intrinsic value theories that made a decision between contradicting desires. Nietzsche writes, “(...) all those instincts of the wild, free, roving man were turned backwards, *against man himself*. (...) all this was pitted against the person who had such instincts: *that* is the origin of ‘bad conscience’.”<sup>24</sup> Religion and other similar traditions were thus born shortly after society to justify this repression of desires. Men developed the false belief that intrinsic value theories must be the source of goodness and badness. After that, when men later discovered that

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<sup>23</sup> GM 1994, pp.57

<sup>24</sup> GM 1994, pp.57

there are no intrinsic values and that all their intrinsic value theories are false, they inevitably fell into nihilism and meaninglessness.<sup>25</sup>

Men is now different than rats. The difference comes from the fact that the rat does not have contradicting desires as rats never turned their instincts inwardly and were therefore never internalized. The rat acts solely based on its desires. When a rat wants to eat, it tries to find food. When it wants to preserve itself, it tries to find a partner to mate. And so on. The fact that society gave rise to contradicting desires is what makes humans different from other animals. Also, the fact that humans have contradicting desires is what enables men to become the Overman and be better than the best rat could ever be. For Nietzsche, “the prospect of an animal soul turning against itself (...) was something so new, profound, unheard-of, puzzling, contradictory and *momentous* on earth that the whole character of the world changed in an essential way. (...) as though man were not an end but just a path, an episode, a bridge, a great promise.”<sup>26</sup> A man has the potential to act on his will to power in a way that animals do not.

Given that men have contradicting desires; men needs to find a systematic way to choose one desire over another. Men do so by finding their own meaning. By acting in accordance with this meaning, men will project force onto the world and thus fulfill their will to power. Men won't just try to grow and extend by mating and creating offspring; rather, they will be able to extend their influence in every single choice they make.

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<sup>25</sup> I recognize that there might be an objection here and that there is more that can be said on this point. I will thus address an objection that pertains to this point on a later section of this paper.

<sup>26</sup> GM 1994, pp.58

This is important for Nietzsche because it allows him to hold a man and an animal to different standards. He can now say that one needs to strive to be like the Overman as long as one has contradicting desires. It also allows us to see the relevance of the sequence of events. Namely, we can see why it is important for the Overman to first escape slave morality and nihilism, and then pursue a self-affirming lifestyle.

We must now look at how the Overman deals with contradicting desires and achieves a self-affirming life. In defending this view, I aim to further convince the reader that Nietzsche thinks that there are extrinsic values and that his claim that the Overman is valuable is warranted and consistent.

Freedom plays an important role on the Overman's life as it allows the Overman to liberate and master himself. However, to understand why the Overman lives a self-affirming lifestyle, we must also look at one's desires. The will to power is our most basic desire but we have many desires that are not the will to power. Those desires motivate us to act as a desire inevitably comes with a drive to fulfill them. As I explained, men have contradicting desires. For Nietzsche, if a person has contradicting desires but has no power to choose one desire over the other, it is because this person has submitted the power of his choice to an intrinsic value theory. Therefore, if a man has no power to choose one desire over the other, he is living a self-undermining lifestyle. On the other hand, a self-affirming lifestyle allows one to fulfill one's desires in a systematic and consistent way. Fulfilling one's desires in accordance with what one finds meaningful is how the Overman exercises his will to power in an active and consistent manner.

We need to make a choice as to what desire to pursue. Instead of letting one's desires run free, the Overman masters himself to create a sort of unity in his being. That is, he will choose the desires that go in line with what he personally finds meaningful and act on those desires. What he personally finds meaningful is what will dictate what desires he chooses to pursue, it is his unifying "glue". He will thus have a consistency in his actions and will always know what desire to pursue. Alexander Nehamas holds this view and says that, the lifestyle of the Overman is, "(...) not a final state of being which follows upon and replaces an earlier process of becoming. Rather, he is thinking of a continual process of greater integration of one's character-traits, habits and patterns of interaction with the world."<sup>27</sup> The Overman is an active being who continuously chooses to act on the desire that he finds most important. Every action is an exercise of his will to power. Without false theories of value imposing force upon him, the Overman is free to extend his force onto the world.

The unification of desires is necessary for one to live a self-affirming lifestyle. To see why that is, imagine the contrary case where a person has contradicting desires but lets those desires run free, or chooses one desire over another at random. If a person lets his desires run free and doesn't know which one to choose, such person will constantly try to satisfy both desires and "switch off" between actions aimed at satisfying the two contradicting desires. This person will inevitably fall short of satisfying either of the desires. This person has no power to choose one desire over the other and has no way to extend its force and fulfill its will to power. Even though this won't be a direct contradiction of the will to power, it will definitely not be an exercise of the will to power. Nietzsche wouldn't be able to say that this is a self-

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<sup>27</sup> Nehamas 1983, pp. 404

contradictory lifestyle, but he will be able to say that this person fails to fulfill the standard that it has set for itself as it has no force to extend onto the world.

The person that chooses desires at random will have the same burden of failing by his own standard. That is the case because this person will have no meaning or force to extend onto the world. He will have no mastery over himself as his random choices indicate that he doesn't know what he personally finds meaningful. Unless, of course, such person finds randomness to be meaningful. If that is the case, that person will still have unity in his being. He will thus be able to extend his force into the world, and his being will be unified through what he finds meaningful, which is randomness in this case. This is in line with Nietzsche's prescription and so such a person can be said to be fulfilling his will to power.<sup>28</sup>

In order to act on one's will to power, one must decisively choose the desire that one finds more important and aim to satisfy that desire. The Overman has created a framework for himself that he uses to choose between desires. This is a continuous and active process of choosing one's desire, acting on it, and thereby fulfilling one's will to power. In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes, "*One thing is needful.-To "give style" to one's character-a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until everyone of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye.*"<sup>29</sup> Giving style to one's character implies finding what one's find meaningful and basing

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<sup>28</sup> Some objectors might think that this is a problem for Nietzsche but I don't see why that is the case. The whole point of having the Overman find his own meaning is to refrain from demanding that everyone find the same thing meaningful. No matter how weird one's meaning is, if that's truly what one finds meaningful, then no outside observer can criticize him for being incoherent, for example. That's why I don't see this as a problem for Nietzsche. Nevertheless, I won't dive deep into this objection.

<sup>29</sup> GS 2001, pp. 163

all choices of actions off of that. That's why the person who finds randomness meaningful fulfills this prescription. When the Overman is faced with contradicting desires, he will know what desire is more important to him; it will be the desire in line with his style and with what he finds meaningful.

This process of giving style is constraining but in a different way that slave morality is constraining. Similarly to slave morality, giving style to one's character will dictate how one acts. However, the difference lies in the fact that the style of the Overman is within his control; the Overman chooses what his style is. He will not submit his power of choice to some theory of intrinsic value that is outside his control. Rather, he will take control of himself and of his actions and every choice he makes will be an exercise of his will to power. Because of that, he will live a self-affirming lifestyle. He will live the best life possible, as every choice he makes will be a fulfillment of his will to power.

There is thus a connection between will to power, freedom and enslavement. Freedom to find one's meaning and to choose what desire is more important is necessary for the fulfillment of one's will to power while enslavement to an intrinsic value theory necessarily leads to the contradiction of one's will to power.<sup>30</sup> The will to power is the ultimate standard that can either be fulfilled or directly contradicted. Freedom and enslavement are the necessary conditions that will determine whether the ultimate standard will be fulfilled or contradicted.<sup>31</sup> This is an important point that

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<sup>30</sup> There will be more on this on the "Objections" section.

<sup>31</sup> A lot has been said on this section and there's a lot for the reader to absorb. However, before summarizing my whole argument, I will defend the view that my interpretation of Nietzsche is philosophically appealing. I will then defend my Nietzschean theory of value against several objections. Presenting the paper in this way is my attempt to make my view as convincing as possible.

I will expand on in section 7.

## **6. Value**

Let's take a step back and look at the big picture to see what Nietzschean values look like. Perhaps the most controversial and interesting part of Nietzsche's theory of value is the fact that value is relative and yet universal while not being intrinsic. This might seem like a daunting view at first but it is my goal to show the reader that this is in fact a very appealing theory of value. I will outline what a Nietzschean value looks like. I will explain its different characteristics and why each characteristic is appealing.

For Nietzsche, values are extrinsic. This means that there is nothing that is valuable in itself. Things are valuable in virtue of something else, namely, in virtue of the will to power. What has value in the negative sense is that which contradicts our will to power and is thus self-undermining. That which allows us to escape self-contradicting lifestyles and actively fulfill our will to power contains value in the positive sense. It is philosophically appealing to have a coherent notion of extrinsic values as one can get rid of inflationary metaphysics. We won't have to posit extra features of reality that are unknown to men and yet dictates what things are valuable. Having a sound notion of extrinsic values is thus a point in favor of a Nietzschean theory of value.<sup>32</sup>

Nietzschean values are relative and yet universal. Nietzsche is able to achieve universality and relativism without contradicting himself. He can give a prescription

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<sup>32</sup> Some readers might be worried that the will to power is not a feature of all life and so Nietzsche does not have a coherent notion of extrinsic values. I will defend the claim that all life has a will to power on the following section.



that applies to all humans and yet has an individual essence. Given his theory, he can say that everyone one “ought” to be like the Overman even though there are many different ways that one can achieve this self-affirming lifestyle. Everyone must act on one’s will to power in a unified way, but everyone is completely free to choose what one’s own style is.

Nietzschean values are relative because each person will have a different definition, and thus a different way, to find meaning in one’s life. As we have showed, the Overman creates his own meaning and that comes from his own will and consciousness. The self-mastery that each individual aspires to is the self-mastery that best aligns with such individual. Self-mastery is personal and the individual should be the sole judge of what brings meaning to his life.

Despite this relative characteristic of freedom and self-mastery, the claim that freedom and self-mastery are valuable is a universal statement. Every single person, regardless of what they find meaningful, must be free and master one’s self. Even though being free and mastering one’s self necessarily entails being free from different constraints and regarding different things as valuable, everyone must be free and master one’s self in some way. Another way to say this is that the way through which one becomes an Overman is exactly the same for everyone and everyone must follow the same process of freeing and mastering one’s self. However, people will achieve different conclusion, or different theories of meaningfulness, after they successfully complete Nietzsche’s prescription.

The fact that the values are universal leads to the point that Nietzsche’s prescription is non-optional. They are non-optional because a failure to follow

Nietzsche's prescription will lead to a self-contradictory lifestyle. To avoid a life that is extrinsically bad, there is no other option than to be like the Overman, given that one has been internalized and has contradicting desires, of course. The fact that this prescription is non-optional, allows Nietzsche to give a recommendation that is applicable to one's life and can be followed by anyone.

Things that are valuable are also a means to an end. However, the end is not something intrinsically valuable. The end just is something that inevitably arises because of the human condition. The Overman is a means through which humans can live the best possible life by fulfilling their will to power. Being like the Overman is valuable because of what they help us achieve, i.e. self-affirmation.

This theory captures the upshots of relativism and universality without creating a conflict. It preserves the freedom and individuality that the relativist theory offers while still retaining a universal, non-optional prescription. It can get all that through a deflationary metaphysics that is relative to the human condition and applicable to one's life. That is why this theory of value can be said to be very philosophically appealing. However, that is not to say that there are no strong objections to this theory.

## **7. Objections**

At this point I would like to bring up the strongest criticisms to my argument and respond to them accordingly. There are two main sources of objections, interpretative objections and philosophical objections. I will outline, and respond to, interpretative and philosophical objections.

Before I dive into the different criticisms to my view, I must be honest and acknowledge that my responses to these objections might not be satisfactory to all. Nevertheless, I attempt to show that there are significant advantages in siding with me in these debates. It is my hope that this can convince the reader that my view is a philosophically appealing, an interpretatively accurate, Nietzschean theory of value.

The first objection has already been mentioned on an earlier section of this paper. Namely, the claim that the last man neglects his will to power and so has no standard that he fails. This is a philosophical concern but also an interpretative one. My reading of Nietzsche states that the last man is bad because he is self-contradictory. However, this self-contradictory status depends on the will to power existing within the last man. If the will to power is not to be found in the last man, he is not self-contradictory and thus not bad. This makes my view incomplete as an interpretation of Nietzsche as Nietzsche clearly believes that the last man is bad.

I, however, have already responded to this interpretative objection in section 4. Nietzsche claims that being alive and having a will to power necessarily go together, one cannot exist without the other. To say that the last man lacks a will to power is to say that the last man lacks life. The last man is indisputably a living creature and so he must also have a will to power. Given Nietzsche's claims about the will to power and the last man, it seems clear to me that we have to deem the last man as having a will to power. Because of that, I believe that the strongest objection to this claim would not be interpretative but philosophical.

As I see it, an objector who worries about the will to power has three options. He must either accept that all life has will to power, either deny that all life has this

will to power, or draw a line that separates the last man from all other life. The first option would clearly not be a problem for my view and so I will discuss the other two possibilities respectively.

There are multiple instances where Nietzsche claims that all life has a will to power. Though I believe this to be true, I do recognize that I have taken that as a brute fact. If one does not agree with this claim, the rest of my paper cannot stand and so an objector can simply reject this premise in attempt to respond to my argument. Because of that, I will try to defend my premise and show that, if an objector aims to reject this premise, he will reach some unwarranted conclusions.

Nietzsche's claim about all life having a will to power can be paralleled with Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin's theory relies on the premise that the ultimate goal of every living creature is to survive and to pass off its genes to the next generation. This ultimate goal that guides the behavior of every living creature just is the will to power. The will to power, or extending one's force and influence, is exactly what every living creature is striving to do in Darwin's theory. The theory of evolution needs the will to power in order for it to be coherent.

An objector who is willing to reject the claim that all life has a will to power will also have to reject the theory of evolution. Since the theory of evolution relies on the premise that all life has will to power, rejecting this premise will force one to reject the whole theory. Rejecting the theory of evolution is a pretty big bullet to bite and so I would not recommend this strategy. Nevertheless, another options still remains and an objector can still insist that the last man lacks the will to power, even if other creatures have it.

But is it coherent to hold such position? I think not. Saying that the last man is different than all life when it comes to the will to power is to claim that the last man has somehow changed his essential nature and his ultimate goal; it is to say that the premise of the theory of evolution does not apply to him anymore. An objector that holds this position will have to explain why, out of all living creatures, the last man is the only creature that doesn't have a will to power. This alone is a heavy burden to bear. Furthermore, even if an objector can defend this position successfully, claiming that the last man doesn't have a fundamental characteristic shared by all life seems to lead to the denial of the theory of evolution as such theory needs the will to power to be shared by all life for its coherence. Creating an exception for the theory of evolution seems to undermine the whole theory. Because of that, agreeing with Nietzsche's claims about the will to power being shared by all life is a philosophically appealing position to hold.

But other objections yet remain. Another point of contention is the fact that Nietzsche claims that there are no intrinsic values. One can also reject this claim, not on interpretative grounds but on philosophical grounds. By rejecting this claim, an objector will deem a Nietzschean theory of value as erroneous. Philosophically speaking, not positing intrinsic values is an appealing view for the reasons that have been discussed. Our epistemic condition makes this appealing because, if there are intrinsic values, we cannot know that they exist. It seems unnecessary to have intrinsicality if we can have a coherent notion of values without it. Because of that, I believe that a deflationary metaphysics that is a result of extrinsic values is more philosophically appealing than positing intrinsicality.

That being said, I understand that there are good arguments for intrinsicity and inflationary metaphysics as well. However, for the purposes of this paper, I won't dive deep into these arguments. I do not believe that this matter has been completely resolved but, for now, I will take the deflationary metaphysics that results from extrinsic values as a point in favor of a Nietzschean theory of value.

Nietzsche claims that, after men joined society, they first turned to religion and then to meaninglessness. An objector might disagree with this and thus not think that men were ever internalized or at least not internalized in the way that Nietzsche describes.<sup>33</sup> I will address this objection briefly by pointing at historical facts. Historical data indicates that the first civilizations of men had some belief in a higher power. This belief has evolved throughout the years but there's evidence that the very first societies believed in some sort of Gods that are the cause for intrinsic values. Different society posited different intrinsic causes but they all had the similarity of positing some sort of intrinsicity. Men thus developed the false belief that value can only exist as long as it is intrinsic. Men did not posit intrinsic values to relinquish the power to make choices, men simply made a mistake and adhered to such false theories. Upon discovering that there are no intrinsic values, men would fall to

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<sup>33</sup> There is more that can be said about this objection. Even if the objector thinks that men were not internalized in the way that Nietzsche claims, it is hard for me to see how an objector would reject the claim that men were, at least at some point in time, internalized at all. Even if an objector rejects the internalization of men altogether, I cannot see an objector rejecting the claim that men have contradicting desires. For Nietzsche, the difference between men and rats is that men have contradicting desires and that's why he can hold men and rats to different standards when it comes to the will to power. Nietzsche gave us an account of how he thinks that happened but rejecting his account would not lead to a rejection of the fact that men and rats are different in terms of desires. I see this as a point of contention but not one that would completely discredit Nietzsche's theory. I believe that most people recognize that men in fact have contradicting desires and so, even if Nietzsche's account of how that happened is inaccurate, his theory of value can still be said to be coherent. Because of that, I don't consider this objection to be significantly problematic.

practical nihilism. Nietzsche's chronology seems to be consistent with historical facts. There is definitely more to be said on this point but, for the purposes of this paper, I will not address it any further.

The last thing I should address is the objection that there is some tension existent within my argument. I talked about the will to power as the ultimate standard for values but I also mentioned freedom and enslavement when talking about things being either good or bad. That is the case because there is a necessary marriage between those concepts. For once, being free is a pre-condition to exercising the will to power. We need freedom as liberty and as self-mastery to find our own meaning and extend it onto the world. However, freedom is necessary but not sufficient for acting upon one's will to power. It is nevertheless important to highlight freedom for a complete Nietzschean theory of value and to understand how the Overman avoids self-contradiction. Also, enslavement is used to describe being constrained by forces outside of your control and having force extend upon you, which is the definition of contradicting the will to power. Enslavement is different than freedom as enslavement is necessary and sufficient for a contradiction of one's will to power.

I have tried to respond to some objections above, but there are naturally more possible objections than I can't adequately deal with here. I think the most important outstanding objection would argue that value can only exist as long as it is intrinsic. Nietzsche should thus be a nihilist regarding all values and his view on non-moral values is incoherent. I would like to address this point in further detail but I would refrain from doing so for the purposes of this paper. Given more space, I would argue that failing by one's own standards seem to be a perfect example of a coherent notion of extrinsic values and so the claim that value can only exist as long as it is intrinsic

seems ungrounded. There is obviously a lot more to this objection as well as to other objections. Nevertheless, I hope to have showed the reader that there are significant advantages in adhering a Nietzschean theory of value similar to the one I have proposed.

## **8. Conclusion**

In order for Nietzsche to be consistent, he needs to believe that value can exist extrinsically. By reading Nietzsche with the interpretation I have proposed, one will find more uniformity amongst his works. We have shown that Nietzsche is not a value nihilist. He believes that some things are valuable while some things are not. However, we have also shown that Nietzsche believes that nothing in the world has intrinsic value; he thinks that things are valuable in virtue of something else. What makes things valuables is how well they fulfill the standard that they set for themselves.

The will to power is the ultimate standard that is set for all life. Contradicting it is what makes the life of the man of slave morality, and the life of last man, bad. Actively trying to fulfill it is what makes the life of the Overman good. I have shown that by explaining how the man of slave morality and the last man fail by their own standard and how the Overman achieves his own standard. This was an effort to defend the view that Nietzsche has a coherent and consistent notion of extrinsic values.

I have also shown that men are different than other animals and that's why men are the only creatures subject to Nietzsche's prescription. This is important



because the will to power is present in all living creatures and not just in men, but Nietzsche's prescription only applies to humans.<sup>34</sup>

Overall, my goal was to show the reader that my interpretation of Nietzsche is an appealing one. For once, it conforms well to the textual evidence. However, given Nietzsche's ambiguity and vagueness, one should not rely solely on textual evidence to come up with a good Nietzschean theory of value. Because of that, I aimed to take philosophical worries into consideration to come up with the best possible view.

I see my theory as being able to hold itself against some strong objections. Nevertheless, there are still issues that need to be resolved. The biggest point of philosophical debate might be Nietzsche's claim that there are no intrinsic values. I mentioned, in section 7, that we cannot prove that intrinsic values exist but we can also not disprove its existence. Given more space, I would explore this issue in depth as it is the foundation of a Nietzschean theory of value. Nevertheless, instead of diving deep into the arguments for and against intrinsicity, I settled for the fact that a deflationary metaphysics is more easily digestible and used that as a point in favor of my theory.

Perhaps one of the most attractive aspects of a Nietzschean theory of value is the fact that Nietzsche's prescription is easily applicable to one's life. Not allowing for something outside of one's control to dictate one's life, finding one's own meaning, using that meaning to choose between competing desires; those are all extremely intelligible psychological advices. Regardless of the philosophical concerns, being like the Overman is something that anyone can do, which is not say

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<sup>34</sup> His prescription could also apply to any unknown creature that were internalized or that has contradicting desires in some way.

that it is easy to do. Nevertheless, it can be done. Even a person who has never taken a philosophy course can hopefully see the value embedded in Nietzsche's prescription and use that to the betterment of one's life.

## Abbreviation for Works Cited

Friedrich Nietzsche

**Z:** *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

**GM:** *On the Genealogy of Morality*

**TW:** *Twilight of the Idols*

**H:** *Human, All too Human A Book for Free Spirits*

**AC:** *The Antichrist*

**WP:** *The Will to Power*

**BGE:** *Beyond Good and Evil*

**GS:** *The Gay Science*

Alexander Nehamas

**Nehamas:** *How One Becomes What One Is*

Nadeem Hussain

**Hussain:** *Honest Illusion: Valuing For Nietzsche's Free Spirits*

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